

CLAIMS:

1. A method of mimetic message settings selection on a messaging client, comprising the steps of:
 - 5 detecting an outgoing message;
 - determining whether the outgoing message is related to a previously received message, the received message having message characteristics;
 - determining messaging settings associated with the message characteristics of the received message where the outgoing message is related to a previously received 10 message; and
 - selecting the messaging settings associated with the message characteristics of the received message to control message characteristics of the outgoing message.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining whether the outgoing 15 message is related to a previously received message comprises the step of determining whether the outgoing message includes a portion of a previously received message.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the received message comprises an attachment, and wherein the step of determining whether the outgoing message includes a portion of a 20 previously received message comprises the step of determining whether the outgoing message includes the attachment.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining whether the outgoing message is related to a previously received message comprises the step of determining whether the outgoing message is a reply to a previously received message.
5. 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining whether the outgoing message is related to a previously received message comprises the step of determining whether the outgoing message is a forward message incorporating a previously received message.
- 10 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining messaging settings comprises the steps of:
 - analyzing the received message to determine the message characteristics; and
 - determining messaging settings that control the message characteristics.
- 15 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the message characteristics are specified in the received message, and wherein the step of determining messaging settings comprises the steps of:
 - accessing the specified message characteristics; and
 - determining messaging settings that control the specified message characteristics.
- 20 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the received message comprises a messaging settings field specifying messaging settings used for the received message, and wherein

the step of determining messaging settings comprises the step of accessing the messaging settings field in the received message.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the received message further comprises messaging settings control flags, and wherein the step of selecting comprises the step of selecting messaging settings based on the control flags.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the control flags indicate which of the messaging settings specified in the messaging settings field must be selected for the outgoing message.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the message characteristics of the received message comprise required message characteristics, and the step of selecting comprises the step of confirming that messaging settings associated with the required message characteristics are selected.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising the step of alerting a user where messaging settings associated with the required message characteristics are not selected.

20 13. The method of claim 1, wherein the message characteristics of the received message comprise required message characteristics, further comprising the steps of:
receiving an input from a user of the messaging client;

determining whether the input changes any of the required message characteristics; and

alerting the user where the input changes any of the required message characteristics.

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14. The method of claim 13, wherein the input specifies further messaging settings in addition to the messaging settings associated with the required message characteristics, further comprising the step of:

10 selecting the further messaging settings in addition to the messaging settings associated with the required message characteristics to control the message characteristics of the outgoing message.

15. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of:

15 ignoring the input where the input changes any of the required message characteristics.

16. The method of claim 13, wherein the received message comprises control flags indicating the required message characteristics.

20 17. The method of claim 13, wherein the message characteristics of the received message further comprise optional message characteristics.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the received message comprises control flags indicating the required message characteristics and the optional message characteristics.
19. The method of claim 8, wherein the message settings field further specifies alternative messaging settings that may be used for the outgoing message instead of the messaging settings used for the received message, and wherein the step of selecting comprises selecting, for each message setting used for the received message, either the message setting used for the received message or an alternative messaging setting.
- 10 20. The method of claim 19, wherein the alternative messaging settings are specified in order of preference.
21. The method of claim 1, wherein the message characteristics of the received message comprise a message characteristic associated with a plurality of messaging settings, and wherein the step of selecting the messaging settings comprises the step of selecting one of the plurality of messaging settings.
22. The method of claim 1, wherein the steps of determining messaging settings and selecting the messaging settings are repeated for each received message to which the outgoing message is related.
23. The method of claim 22, wherein the outgoing message is related to a first received message having first message characteristics and a second received message having

second message characteristics, and wherein the step of selecting the messaging settings associated with the message characteristics of the received message further comprises the steps of:

determining whether the first and second message characteristics include conflicting

5 message characteristics; and

selecting messaging settings associated with the first and second message characteristics where the first and second message characteristics do not include conflicting message characteristics.

10 24. The method of claim 22, wherein the outgoing message is related to a first received message having first message characteristics and a second received message having second message characteristics, and wherein the step of selecting the messaging settings associated with the message characteristics of the received message further comprises the steps of:

15 determining whether messaging settings associated with the first and second message characteristics include conflicting messaging settings; and

selecting the messaging settings associated with the first and second message characteristics where the messaging settings associated with the first and second message characteristics do not include conflicting messaging settings.

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25. The method of claim 23, wherein the step of selecting the messaging settings associated with the message characteristics of the received message further comprising the step of:

resolving conflicting message characteristics where the first and second message characteristics include conflicting message characteristics.

26. The method of claim 24, wherein the step of selecting the messaging settings
5 associated with the message characteristics of the received message further comprises the step of:

resolving conflicting messaging settings where the messaging settings associated with the first and second message characteristics include conflicting messaging settings.

10 27. The method of claim 26, wherein the step of resolving the conflicting messaging settings comprises selecting most secure messaging settings among the conflicting messaging settings.

28. The method of claim 26, wherein the step of resolving the conflicting messaging
15 settings comprises the steps of:

alerting a user of the messaging client to the conflicting messaging settings; and
prompting the user to choose which of the conflicting messaging settings should be selected.

20 29. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

determining whether the received message comprises message restrictions established by a message sender where the outgoing message is related to a previously received message;

determining whether processing of the outgoing message is allowed by the message restrictions where the received message comprises message restrictions; and

processing the outgoing message in accordance with the selected messaging settings where processing of the outgoing message is allowed by the message restrictions.

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30. The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of:

contacting the message sender where the received message comprises message restrictions

10 31. The method of claim 29, further comprising the steps of:

contacting the message sender to request permission to process the outgoing message where processing of the outgoing message is not allowed by the message restrictions; and

15 processing the outgoing message in accordance with the selected messaging settings where a response comprising permission to process the outgoing message is received from the message sender.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein the response further comprises an indication of required messaging settings to be used in the processing of the outgoing message.

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33. The method of claim 1, wherein the message characteristics of the received message comprise one or more characteristics selected from the group consisting of:

message format, message font, common message text, message signing, and message encryption.

34. The method of claim 33, wherein the message signing and the message encryption
5 are signing and encryption according to Secure Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions
(S/MIME).

35. The method of claim 33, wherein the message signing and the message encryption
are signing and encryption according to Pretty Good Privacy (PGP).

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36. The method of claim 1, wherein the messaging client operates on a wireless mobile
communication device.

37. The method of claim 1, wherein the messaging client operates on a personal
15 computer system.

38. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of selecting default messaging
settings to control message characteristics of the outgoing message where the outgoing
message is not related to a previously received message.

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39. A system of mimetic messaging settings selection comprising:
a message store configured to store messages having message characteristics; and

✓ a messaging client configured to determine whether an outgoing message to be sent by the messaging client is related to a message in the message store, to determine messaging settings associated with the message characteristics of the message in the message store where the outgoing message is related to a message in the message store, 5 and to select the messaging settings associated with the message characteristics of the message in the message store to control message characteristics of the outgoing message.

40. The system of claim 39, wherein the message store is configured to store messages 10 received by the messaging client and messages sent by the messaging client.

41. The system of claim 40; wherein the messaging client is further configured to determine whether the outgoing message is related to any of the messages received by the messaging client.

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42. The system of claim 40, wherein the messages in the message store include a message comprising a messaging settings field specifying messaging settings used to control the message characteristics of the message.

20 43. The system of claim 42, wherein the messaging client is further configured to select the messaging settings specified in the messaging settings field of the message in the message store to which the outgoing message is related.

44. The system of claim 40, further comprising a messaging settings store specifying messaging settings used to control the message characteristics of messages in the message store.

5 45. The system of claim 44, wherein the message store and the messaging settings store are indexed by message identifiers.

46. The system of claim 44, wherein the messaging client is further configured to access the messaging settings store, and to select the messaging settings specified in the 10 messaging settings store for the message in the message store to which the outgoing message is related.

47. The system of claim 39, wherein the system is implemented in a device selected from the group consisting of: a personal computer system, a handheld electronic device, a 15 wireless mobile communication device, a mobile telephone having data communication functionality, a two-way pager, a voice communication device, a data communication device, and a dual-mode communication device.

48. The system of claim 39, wherein the message characteristics of the messages in the 20 message store comprise secure messaging characteristics selected from the group consisting of: message signing and message encryption.

